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Abstract

Recent German criticism has demonstrated that the relationships of Austria and Germany with the "Orient" have been more complex than Edward Said's *Orientalism* makes it appear. Furthermore, Said only touches upon gender issues. Studies like Rana Kabbani's *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule* explore the convergence of race, class, and gender in the conceptualization of the "Orient." Kabbani claims that in Elias Canetti's *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch* the narrator's identification with the colonizer's position enters into his representation of self as much as does his gender. My essay demonstrates how the Austrian writer Barbara Frischmuth and the German writer Hanne Mede-Flock represent their female protagonists' interaction with the "Orient" as more complex and less "colonizing" than that of Canetti's narrator. While Frischmuth rewrites the *Bildungsroman* to subvert Eurocentric assumptions underlying travel literature, Mede-Flock goes one step further by taking the focus away from the individual protagonist and intellectual life in the city, and by representing the encounter with Turkey as political. However, Turkey remains a Eurocentric construct in the two novels, and their authors, by attempting to undermine some cultural stereotypes, unwittingly reinforce others.

Keywords

Austria, Germany, relationship, Orientalism, Orient, Edward Said, gender issues, gender, criticism, Rana Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient: Devise and Rule*, race, class, gender, convergence of race, Elias Canetti, *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch*, narrator, identification, colonizer, colonialism, colonial, representation of self, self, Barbara Frischmuth, Hanne Mede-Flock, female protagonist, colonizing, *Bildungsroman*, Eurocentric, travel literature, individual protagonist, intellectual life, Turkey, political, Eurocentric construct, stereotypes, undermine, reinforce

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In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt uses the term “seeing man” for the European traveler/travel writer, “who seek[s] to secure [his] innocence in the same moment as [he] assert[s] European hegemony” and “whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (7). Although Pratt’s discussion focuses on the imperial age, in some post-imperial travel writing by European men, particularly about the Islamic Orient, as, for example, Elias Canetti’s *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch* (1967; *The Voices of Marrakesh*, 1978), the interaction of the narrator with the other culture is still predominantly determined by his “colonizing” gaze.

The fact that Canetti’s title indicates that the auditory is the primary sense of reception is irrelevant in this context since the attitude of the “listening man” in his travelogue is that of the “seeing man” who controls the contact with the Other by deciding for himself when to get involved with his surroundings and when to keep his distance. Rana Kabbani, who claims that “Canetti is first and foremost on a journey through a host of startling images” that “offers the reader a passage into an Orient that is pure *tableau vivant* in the manner of Flaubert” (122), sees the gaze of Canetti’s narrator/autobiographical self fixed on the Moroccans’ cruelty to animals, the repulsiveness of beggars, and the veiled beauty of the women. Canetti’s narrator establishes his superiority in the relationships with the locals not only by exoticizing his surroundings, but also by not disclosing his own ethnic background—he identifies himself as an Englishman—by refusing to learn Arabic and by com-

municating in French, the language of the colonizer. Furthermore, although at times he chooses not to interfere with local customs out of a misguided sense of propriety (the ill-treatment of the camels), at other times he feels free to intrude into private space (the house of the family Dahan) and to violate cultural norms (his staring at the unveiled woman). However, it is not only the narrator's identification with the European's/colonizer's position that enters into his representation of self. The fact that he is a man also plays a significant role.

This article demonstrates how the Austrian writer Barbara Frischmuth and the German writer Hanne Mede-Flock, in their novels *Das Verschwinden des Schattens in der Sonne* (1973; *The Disappearance of the Shadow in the Sun*) and *Im Schatten der Mondsichel* (1985; *In the Shadow of the Crescent Moon*)¹ respectively, represent their female protagonists' interaction with the "Orient" as more complex and less "colonizing" than, for example, that of Canetti's protagonist.²

Despite the pervasiveness of the "Orient" in German/Austrian literature, little scholarship had been done on Orientalism in literature written in German until German critics felt challenged by Edward Said's study of the conceptual production of the "Orient." Said modifies his statement that "to speak of Orientalism . . . is to speak mainly . . . of a British and French cultural enterprise" (4), because other European countries had no colonies in the "Orient," by claiming that "what German Orientalism had in common with Anglo-French . . . Orientalism was a kind of intellectual *authority* over the Orient within Western culture" (19). Yet, as German critics have recently demonstrated, Germany's and Austria's relationships with the "Orient" have been more complex than Said makes them appear. Donna K. Heizer, for example, explains that although "depictions of the Orient in the history of German literature roughly conform to the kinds of stereotypes described by Said . . . different emphases were placed upon these stereotypes at different times . . . and because German cultural identities changed over time, different constructions of the Orient were presented in the history of German literature" (7). Turks, in particular, had long been regarded as dangerous neighbors to the East threatening to invade Middle Europe. As Heizer points out, in order to defend themselves, Germans and Austrians had "to 'know' their enemy" (7). Therefore it was no coincidence that the first European Department of Oriental Studies was established in Vienna as early as 1754, not long after the Austrian

Empire escaped Ottoman invasion and forty years before the *Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes* was founded in Paris.³

The relationships between Turkey and Germany and Turkey and Austria have become even more complicated with Turkish mass immigration to "Western" European countries during the 1960s and 1970s. Numbering 2.3 million,⁴ Turkish immigrants constitute by far the largest group of "foreigners" in Germany. Although this is not the place to discuss the obstacles to Turkish "integration" created by Germany's outdated immigration laws, which link citizenship to blood and define national identity by common culture and history, it should be pointed out that many first-generation Turkish writers resort to satire,⁵ counter-hegemonic discourse,⁶ and other forms of anti-racist writing in response to German xenophobia in general and prejudice against Turks in particular. Second-generation Turks like Renan Demirkan and Akif Pirinçci, on the other hand, construct the identity of their protagonists as hybrid. These writers view cultural hybridity as either advantageous,⁷ that is, as permitting the individual access to more than one culture, or as disadvantageous,⁸ that is, as making it impossible for the individual to feel at home in any single culture. Estrangement from their parents' culture often causes second-generation characters to look at Turkey through tourist eyes as, for example, Demirkan's narrator in *Schwarzer Tee mit drei Stück Zucker*.

The Turkish presence in Germany has also prompted the representation of migrant Turks in texts by German writers as in the documentary prose of Max von der Grün, Günter Wallraff, and Paul Geiersbach,⁹ in the plays *Furcht und Hoffnung der BRD* by Franz Xaver Kroetz and *Groß und klein* by Botho Strauß,¹⁰ and the novels *Gruppenbild mit Dame* by Heinrich Böll, and *Lenz* by Peter Schneider, to name only the most widely known texts. Barbara Frischmuth also represents the interaction between the "Orient" and the "Occident" in several of her other novels. In *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* (1979; *Kai and the Love for Models*), the Austrian boy Kai learns to accept and live with cultural difference through contact with his young Turkish friends. Frischmuth often portrays the world of children, whose perception of reality and whose friendships represent creative alternatives in her novels, in opposition to the world of adults, which she sees limited by conventions and prejudice. In the trilogy of novels *Die Mystifikationen der Sophie Silber* (1976; *The Mystifications of Sophie Silber*), Amy oder die

Metamorphose (1978; *Amy or the Metamorphosis*), of which *Kai und die Liebe zu den Modellen* constitutes the final part, Frischmuth focuses on the problems of her female middle-class protagonists as well as on the struggles of Turkish migrant women in Austria.

Keeping the complexity of the relationship between Turkey and German-speaking Europe in mind, I argue that despite Frischmuth's and Mede-Flock's acute awareness of the pitfalls of Orientalism, Turkey remains a Eurocentric construct in their texts and the two authors, by attempting to undermine some cultural stereotypes, unwittingly reinforce others. Two of the most prominent stereotypes of "the Orient" in European texts are its depiction as both a place of sensuality and a place of violence. While *Verschwinden* and *Mondsichel* avoid stereotyping Turkish men as sexual aggressors, they depict European women as being able to live their sexuality more freely in Turkey than at home. But more important, both narratives take place in times of political unrest. Nazire Akbulut assumes that *Verschwinden* uses the 1970 workers' demonstration in Istanbul and Kocaeli against changes to the Labor Law as a historical backdrop rather than the 1960 Menderes putsch, which occurred when Frischmuth was actually staying in Erzurum as a student. *Mondsichel* seems to take place in the time between the military coups of 1971 and 1980 when the Turkish government attempted to counter the alleged move away from Atatürk's agenda as Muslim fundamentalist, leftist, and Kurdish movements were gaining power.

While Barbara Frischmuth rewrites the traditional *Bildungsroman* to subvert the Eurocentric assumption underlying much travel literature that the protagonist grows emotionally and spiritually through the encounter with the foreign culture, Mede-Flock¹¹ goes one step further by taking the focus away from the individual protagonist and from intellectual life in the city, and by representing the encounter with Turkey as political. As Arlene Teraoka points out, "while Third World representations by European authors may never be free of Eurocentrism, the cultural biases of the European will appear in different ways, with varying degrees of self-reflection, and within evolving and competing agendas" (*East, West, and Others* 5).

The reader learns nothing about the life of Frischmuth's protagonist prior to her stay in Istanbul. Her identity in the relationship with her Turkish friends is defined solely by the fact that she is a German-speaking Orientalist who has studied Turkish and who in-

tends to do research for her doctoral thesis about the Dervish order of the Bektashi. It is also obvious from the first page of the novel that she will soon return to her home country despite the attempts of some of her friends to talk her into establishing long-term relationships. Although this home country is not identified, the novel suggests that the narrator, like Frischmuth, who also studied Orientalism, is Austrian. *Verschwinden* leaves it open whether or not the narrator is actually going to benefit in the long term from her experiences. Unlike the traditional *Bildungsroman*, this novel does not follow its protagonist back home to depict her reintegration into society.

Because the narrator is Austrian and not German, she constructs Turkey from an Austrian point of view as is apparent, for example, from the narrator's explanation towards the end of the novel that she has changed her views about the Ottoman occupation of Vienna. Furthermore, the fact that, unlike Mede-Flock's novel, *Verschwinden* takes place only in Istanbul and only among intellectuals also shapes the protagonist's interaction with Turkey in significant ways. Her Turkish friends accept the narrator as intellectually equal because she speaks Turkish—an accomplishment that makes her experience different from that of Canetti's narrator—and knows more about some aspects of Turkish history, including the history of the Turkish language, than they do. However, in spite of her expertise and historical knowledge, her relationships with both men and women are compromised not only by her being European but, even more so, by her being a woman.

The (European) woman's freedom of movement is more limited in "Oriental" society than that of the "seeing man." Although the narrator shows all the signs of the emancipated "Western" woman of the 1970s—she walks the city unaccompanied, chats and smokes with various bookstore owners, and has two Turkish lovers—her friends are protective of her. Sevim, who seems like an overbearing older sister, worries when she does not return for dinner and stays up late to make certain that she is safe. Aksu behaves towards her more like a father than a lover, the Tartar gives her maternal advice, and one of the reasons why Turgut follows her about town is to shield her from dangerous encounters.

On the other hand, the female narrator is granted relatively intimate contact with the local women from which the "seeing man," for cultural and religious reasons, is excluded. The Tartar discusses her

pregnancy with her, and Sevim and Ayten, during an afternoon of clandestine drinking and intimate conversation, pin the narrator to the floor and try to shave her pubic hair with the intention to “make her more beautiful” (69), an act that could be interpreted as a rite of passage. Furthermore, the fact that she is a European woman also comes into play in her interaction with strangers and determines expectations and assumptions as well as relations of power. For example, the two women who find her asleep and initiate a conversation point at their marriage bands and her unringed finger; the school girls to whom she shows Süheyla’s photograph wonder why she does not know where to find her; and the mysterious, apparently insane mosque servant, whom she follows without resistance, almost pushes her over a balustrade. This is as close as the narrator ever comes to having her life threatened in this time of political unrest, curfews, and police violence—ironically within the sanctuary of a mosque. Unlike the “seeing man,” whose interaction with the Other takes place mainly in public space, that is, in the street, the market, and on the road, Frischmuth’s protagonist’s interaction with the other culture, like that of other women travelers, is circumscribed by her relationships with other people.

But even more characteristic of the woman traveler’s/the narrator’s approach to the other culture is her attempt to open herself unconditionally to her surroundings. She longs for a mystical “Entwertung” ‘dissolution of her identity’ (*Verschwinden* 221), an experience similar to that of the thirty birds in search of the Simurgh, the divine bird, to whom it is eventually revealed that they themselves are the Simurgh, or that of the shadow disappearing in the sun. Thus one of the narrator’s greatest fears is to be excluded. She envies Sevim’s intimacy with Turgut as much as she wants to be Sevim’s confidante. She also has difficulty establishing personal boundaries so that she sometimes finds the dynamics of this triangular relationship oppressive. The images of the city, which penetrate her during her lengthy walks, overwhelm her physically to an extent that by the end of the summer she develops pneumonia and has to be hospitalized.

However, unlike the male protagonist in the typical *Bildungsroman*, Frischmuth’s narrator realizes too late how she has failed, and the narrative denies her the opportunity to demonstrate that she has learned from her mistakes. Gudrun Brokoph-Mauch sees the narrator’s shortcoming in her inability to ask the right ques-

tions. And indeed, towards the end of the novel, the narrator explains that all of a sudden she was overcome by the urge to ask all the questions she had neglected to ask earlier. Brokoph-Mauch's claim also seems to be confirmed by Sevim's criticism of the narrator:

Manchmal verstehe ich dich nicht, sagte Sevim, du kennst uns, du lebst mit uns, du interessierst dich für alles, was uns betrifft, das heißt, was uns betroffen hat, du sprichst unsere Sprache, du weißt über unsere Geschichte Bescheid und trotzdem schaust du nicht wirklich um dich, nimmst vieles nicht wahr, was um dich her vorgeht. Du hast einen eigenen Blick dafür entwickelt, was von früher her noch an uns ist, aber das, was neu an uns ist, interessiert dich nicht.

Sometimes I don't understand you, Sevim said. You know us, you live with us, and you are interested in everything that affects us, that is, what used to affect us. You speak our language, you know our history, but still, you don't really look around, and you fail to see what is going on. You have developed a view of what still sticks to us from the past, but you are not interested in what is new about us. (142)

It is only after her almost symbolic near-death experience that the narrator reassesses both her various relationships and her scholarly approach to her dissertation topic—she even decides to abandon her project and write about the present. While the colonizing gaze of Canetti's narrator is turned outward in an attempt to control its immediate surroundings, Frischmuth's narrator is being "controlled" by the outside world because she fails to see.

The narrator's failure to read her surroundings goes hand in hand with her lack of trust in language. It is this *Zweifel an der Sprache* (doubt about language) that links the novel to the Austrian tradition of language scepticism and therefore also to Canetti's *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch*. However, as shown above, it differs from Canetti's text in its representation of the "Orient." While Canetti's narrator dreams of a language reduced to sounds and screams, Frischmuth's protagonist studies the Arabic and Persian roots of modern Turkish as if she were in search of *Ursprache*.

But she soon finds out that knowing the history of the language makes it even more difficult for her to communicate: "Ich sah einer Sprache zu, wie sie sich änderte, aber der Versuch, mit ihr Schritt zu halten, brachte nichts als Niederlagen" "I was looking at a lan-

guage as it was changing, and the attempt to keep up with it brought nothing but defeat' (38). When Ersever tells her that two of his writer friends were put in jail, she not only realizes that she lacks the technical vocabulary to discuss legal matters, but she also discovers that she is unfamiliar with Turkey's legal system. Since the narrator has not spent enough time in Turkey to become culturally literate, she fails to read the signs of revolution around her and, above all, Sevim's and Turgut's involvement in it.

The most tragic "misunderstanding," however, is Turgut's violent death. Apparently, Turgut did not participate in the demonstration but was standing by when one of the demonstrators seemed to recognize him and grabbed him by the shoulders. The police interpreted this event as the demonstrators' attack on the passers-by and reacted by shooting into the crowd killing Turgut and two others. The fact that the novel concludes with the image of the white body of a man whose skin is marked by a bleeding black hole where the bullet entered, and not on the protagonist's "happy" return to Austria, can be read as the novel's refusal to comply with the conventions of the traditional *Bildungsroman*. However, the conclusion also represents Turkey as a place in which violence may erupt indiscriminately and, at least to "Western" eyes, unpredictably.

While *Verschwinden* deals with the individual's failure to find a satisfying way of approaching the Other, Hanne Mede-Flock's *Im Schatten der Mondsichel* shifts the focus from the individual to a group of protagonists. Judith is a German who quits her job in a travel agency and separates from her husband to work in an Istanbul hospital. Her colleague and friend Berrin, daughter of a Turkish mother and a German father, teaches her Turkish and, inspired by Judith's fascination with Turkey, follows her to Istanbul where she ends up working as a journalist for an underground newspaper. Mehmet, Schaban, and his brother-in-law Alparslan leave Yesilçay, which shortly after is wiped out by the military, to find work and political action in Istanbul.

While the novel caricatures these three and other male characters, it portrays the female characters Judith, Berrin, Nilüfer, the medical student turned bourgeois housewife, Dr. Kahraman, the lesbian senior medical officer, the intellectual Aysche, and the illiterate Schengül, as both individuals and representatives of women in the different walks of life. Thereby the novel offers a political analysis of women's oppression in patriarchal society and, by analogy, the

Turkish people's betrayal by Western nations who turn a blind eye to the Turkish government's violation of human rights and supply the government with arms to fight the Kurds and political dissidents.

Unlike in *Verschwinden*, in which the protagonist's Austrian background is not used for contrastive observations about the two cultures, in *Mondsichel* Judith's and Berrin's German background gives rise to cultural comparisons. Judith leaves Germany to escape from a world which she associates with "Konsumgesellschaft, Gehalterhöhungen und Profitraten, Alltagsrott und entfremdete [sic] Arbeit" 'materialism, salary raises, profit rates, everyday routine, and alienation of labor' (11). Turkish hospitality and compassion are contrasted with German indifference and emotional coldness. Dr. Kahraman, who believes that people suffer from illness when they suppress their emotions, explains to Judith that her chronic hepatitis can be interpreted as her body's reaction to a repressive environment, that is, an insensitive husband and a society that does not meet her emotional needs. Listening to Judith's life story, Dr. Kahraman wonders whether Judith's husband is one of those Germans who ask a "foreigner" to leave as soon as they worry about their own well-being—an allusion to growing xenophobia in the Germany of the 1970s, which the government attempted to curb through regulations such as *Anwerbestopp* (hiring freeze) and *Wartezeiterlaß* (waiting period decree).¹²

With Judith, Mede-Flock creates a European traveler whose behavior contrasts in significant ways with that of Frischmuth's protagonist. Judith quickly decides that book knowledge is not going to be useful in her encounter with the locals in Anatolia: "Jetzt kam ihr auch noch ein Goethezitat in den Kopf, dessen Aussage überhaupt nicht zur Situation paßte. Überhaupt, was hatte sie nicht alles über die Türkei gelesen!" 'Of all things, a Goethe quotation popped into her head whose content did not at all match the situation, not unlike everything else she had read about Turkey!' (10). Judith's approach to the other culture is characterized by action and involvement. Unlike Frischmuth's protagonist, who after two futile attempts to contact Süheyla, loses interest and gives up, Judith eventually manages to deliver a message to Mehmet after following him across Anatolia and Kurdistan. Judith also witnesses the government troops' attack on Yesilçay. When she describes the atrocities to Berrin and expresses her difficulty to coping with what she

has seen, Berrin responds with a lecture that sounds similar and yet quite different from the one Sevim gives Frischmuth's protagonist:

"Ich verstehe eines nicht," sagte Berrin, "du fährst fast jedes Jahr für zwei oder drei Monate in die Türkei, hast viel gesehen und kennst die Ansichten deiner Freunde über die politischen Verhältnisse in ihrem Land. Das sollte dir eigentlich helfen, über die Geschichte von Yesilçai hinwegzukommen."

"I don't understand one thing," said Berrin, "you travel to Turkey almost every year for two or three months. You have seen much and you know your friends' opinions about their country's political situation. That should be sufficient to help you cope with the events of Yesilçai." (93)

The textual similarity between this passage and that in Frischmuth's novel quoted above and other intertextual analogies make me believe that Mede-Flock was familiar with Frischmuth's novel and might actually be responding to it. If one compares Berrin's assessment of Judith with Sevim's criticism of Frischmuth's protagonist, it is obvious that Judith, by opening her eyes to the violence around her, is able to narrow the cultural gap whereas Frischmuth's protagonist is not. While both women's bodies react with illness to the foreign environment, Judith's hepatitis, as mentioned above, is explained as a reaction to the familiar, that is, Germany, rather than the unfamiliar Turkey. And last but not least, when Judith decides to spend the night with the owner of the movie theater from the next village rather than in the company of her new friend Nilüfer and the other women, her immediate response when the women shun her is to judge them as intolerant and indoctrinated with male standards. However, she soon realizes that she should at least have openly discussed with the women the cultural differences between "Western" and "Eastern" sexual behaviors. Frischmuth's protagonist, on the other hand, hides from Sevim the fact that she spent the night with Turgut; the gulf between the two women consequently widens.

Although one part of *Mondsichel* focuses on the relationship of the six women during the time they are living together in Istanbul, Anatolia and Kurdistan play important roles in the novel. The novel moves in a circle from the country to the city and back to the country. It opens with a description of village life in Anatolia where Judith is shown interacting with the locals. The peasants' life is represented as one of extreme hardship and brutal exploitation by the

agas. When Judith, in search of Mehmet, arrives in the Kurdish Diyarbakir, she observes that the conditions in which people live are even worse than those in Anatolia. Both of these rural areas are depicted as being ruled by Islamic fundamentalist leaders, and life in the two villages is characterized by the oppression of women and children.

If Mede-Flock is guilty of stereotypical representation, it is for her seemingly one-sided depiction of rural Turkish women as victims of patriarchy. As Marilya Veteto-Conrad points out, citing the sociologist Serim Timur, "contrary to common Western belief, patriarchal family units constitute only one-fourth to one-fifth of [Turkish] villages and small towns" (Veteto-Conrad 60). Veteto-Conrad concludes that "Germans, for whom the socio-cultural system of Turkish male and female roles is close to incomprehensible, cannot see beyond the image of the harem as a symbol for Turkish norms" (64) and that even Turkish-born women writers in Germany sometimes perpetuate the stereotype of the Turkish woman as victim. Aysel Özakin, for example, reinscribes the "Western" stereotype of "the Turkish woman" as exploited and oppressed by Turkish men in her novel *Die Preisvergabe* (1979; *The Prizegiving*, 1988). As Annette Wierschke has shown, however, Mede-Flock manages to balance her critical representation of the victim status of rural women by showing that victimization of women is ubiquitous and by depicting her female characters as capable of initiating change.

In *Mondsichel* patriarchal structures as found in the country do not lose their temporary power over the female characters living in the city. This is obvious from the way Alparslan and even the revolutionary Mehmet treat their wives. Istanbul is the place, however, where all characters eventually experience some kind of transformation. And, as mentioned above, some of them return to the country with the intention to bring about social change, a development that seems to indicate hope for the future of rural Turkey. This future, however, the novel implies, is unlikely to be brought about by government intervention but has to be accomplished through the personal involvement and initiative of the educated.

Within the context of the novel, to be educated is not identical to being intellectual. Rather, it is a state of social awareness and compassion which is opposed to the mystical and apolitical "dissolution of the self" that Frischmuth's protagonist is seeking. Women, who for Mede-Flock play the most important part in social and po-

litical progress, have to learn first how to free themselves from various societal restraints. The three women in *Mondsichel* who most conspicuously infringe upon male-defined conventions—Dr. Kahraman, Judith, and Berrin—are censored accordingly by the men with whom they have contact. Berrin, however, because of her literacy in both cultures, is the most self-confident and independent. She challenges male domination and reduces the male characters' interaction with her to compliance and disgruntled scowls. Schaban's assessment of Berrin's behavior towards men, "Es war dreist, was sich Berrin den Männern gegenüber herausnahm" 'Berrin's behavior towards men was presumptuous' (172) is representative of the men's silent protest against Berrin's attack on patriarchal structures.

While the female characters' political strategies are characterized by ingenuity, humor, and courage, those of the male characters are characterized by inflexibility, violence, and cowardice. Self-gratification overrules the interest of the community in Mehmet's and Schaban's actions. As Akbulut points out, Mehmet's murder of a political opponent is thus contrasted with Schengül's murder of her husband: "Während das Abscheuliche an Mehmeds Mord ausführlich und für den Leser realistisch beschrieben wird, adaptiert die Erzählerin für Schengüls Tat die Mythenwelt" 'While the horridness of Mehmet's murder is depicted in realistic detail, the narrator resorts to mythology to describe Schengül's deed' (Akbulut 167). The crescent moon casts its shadow as Schengül picks up the axe, which is mythically transformed into the Amazon labrys, and reclaims her own life and that of other women. In matriarchal mythology the moon presages change and brings life during its crescent phase. By foregrounding the mythological role of the crescent moon, the text eclipses its meaning as emblem adopted by the Ottoman Empire. In Mede-Flock's visual pun, the crescent moon's shadow can therefore be interpreted as women's oppression by state and religion which they need to overcome through collaborative efforts.

The image of the crescent moon casting its shadow also contrasts with that of the disappearance of the shadow in the sun in Frischmuth's novel. While the sun represents male energy and the image of the disappearance of the sun is based on male mythology, as it is taken from a tale in Farudeddin Attar's *The Book of Birds* (Frischmuth, "Looking over the Fence" 460), *Mondsichel* resorts to matriarchal mythology, just as Frischmuth does in her subsequent novels and in her play *Die Frau im Mond* (1982; *The Woman in the*

Moon) to reconstruct women's history and redefine their position in society.

While *Verschwinden* focuses on the protagonist's failure to comprehend the other culture despite her knowledge about it, *Mondsichel* projects an almost utopian view of the possibility of overcoming cultural barriers through solidarity and political action. As Georg Pichler points out, the protagonist's lack of identity in *Verschwinden* is partly responsible for her failure. *Mondsichel*, on the other hand, focuses on a variety of characters who all have different backgrounds in regard to nationality, culture, class, gender, and sexual orientation, to show how identity is historically and socially shaped by these factors. As mentioned above, *Verschwinden* does not follow the protagonist back to Austria whereas *Mondsichel* reunites Judith and Berrin in Germany where they accidentally meet during the demonstration against the completion of the nuclear plant in Brokdorf. Both have learned from their life in Turkey that political action does not stop at national borders.

To arrive at a fair assessment of the two novels and their representation of Turkey, one needs to read them against the cultural and personal backgrounds of their authors and the political and historical contexts that inform their writing. While Frischmuth's text is an early response to male travel writing about the "Orient" such as *Die Stimmen von Marrakesch* and implicitly contrasts female and male modes of interaction with the Other, Mede-Flock's text can be read as a response to novels like *Verschwinden*, which from a feminist point of view might seem apolitical and esoteric. *Verschwinden* evokes stereotypical images of Austria as a peaceful country that does not provide the space or need for political action and therefore fails to prepare the protagonist for her stay in Turkey, which, by contrast, is represented as a place haunted by violence. However, Mede-Flock depicts the clashes between demonstrators and police in Germany as almost equally violent as those in Turkey. By dedicating the novel to Nuriye Bekir, who was stabbed by her husband in front of a women's shelter in Berlin while her four children looked on, Mede-Flock draws attention to the fact that, with the arrival of Turkish migrants in Germany and a growing Turkish German population, Turkey has moved closer to Germany than Germans ever thought possible. This new reality, so the novel suggests, requires that "Orient" and "Occident" learn from each other.

Notes

1. Henceforth cited in the text as *Verschwinden* and *Mondsichel*. All translations from German into English in this paper are mine.

2. Significantly, with the exception of Else-Lasker Schüler's *Die Nächte der Tino von Bagdad* (1907; *The Nights of Tino of Baghdad*) and *Der Prinz von Theben* (1912; *The Prince of Thebes*), all twentieth-century German/Austrian texts in representing the "Orient" written prior to Frischmuth's novel were written by men.

3. See Donna K. Heizer, *Jewish-German Identity in the Orientalist Literature of Else Lasker-Schüler, Friedrich Wolf, and Franz Werfel* and Andrea Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur*.

4. See Vera Gaserow, "Zwei Pässe für Einwanderer: Warum zögern die Deutschen? 'Mehr Mut, bitte!' Interview mit Emine Demirbüken, Ausländerbeauftragte, CDU-Mitglied und Doppelstaatlerin."

5. Two of the most satirical Turkish German writers are Sinasi Dikmen and Osman Engin.

6. Both Arlene Teraoka in "*Gastarbeiterliteratur: The Other Speaks Back*" and Leslie Adelson in "Opposing Oppositions: Turkish-German Questions in Contemporary German Studies" discuss counter-discursive strategies in Turkish writing/writing about Turks in German. See also my articles "Werther's Others: From Plenzdorf to Piriñçi" and "Writing Back to the German 'Masters.'" "

7. Renan Demirkan in *Schwarzer Tee mit drei Stück Zucker*, Zehra Çirak in her poetry, Emine Sevgi Özdamar in her novels and plays, and Alev Tekinay in her most recent texts, all view cultural hybridity as enriching.

8. Alev Tekinay is less positive about cultural hybridity in her early prose, and so is Aysel Özakin in some of her texts.

9. See Arlene Teraoka's article "Talking 'Turk': On Narrative Strategies and Cultural Stereotypes" as well as chapter five of *East, West, and Others: The Third World in Postwar German Literature*.

10. See Teraoka's "*Gastarbeiterliteratur: The Other Speaks Back*."

11. Hanne Mede-Flock, who traveled extensively in Turkey, died of chronic hepatitis shortly after the text was published. As far as I know, *Im Schatten der Mondsichel* is the only novel she wrote.

12. When the number of migrant workers had grown beyond projections, a hiring freeze was put into effect in 1973 to contain their number. In 1979, the waiting period decree was passed by the Federal Ministry of Labor to encourage persons of the same family reunification. It declared that members of a

family who had come to join their relatives would have to wait a certain time for work permits.

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